

GAP quick-start self-audit

food quality and safety program

Presented by the Almond Board of California



Section 1: Documentation and Traceability

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
1.1 Farm History and Physical Layout	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed records of land-use history and ownership are easily accessible. Detailed maps of all production blocks include block and row numbers. Detailed layout maps of all facilities, including adjacent operations and landuse, are maintained and updated annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Records of landuse history and ownership are available. Maps of production blocks have reference numbers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Land ownership is documented. Maps of production blocks are available but not detailed.
1.2 Production and Harvest Sequence	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed flow diagram and spreadsheet for varietal mix, typical pre-bloom to postharvest operations, and seasonal timing is updated annually, as needed. All crop management practices and harvest dates are available in both general and ranch-specific flowcharts. Lot numbers are assigned as loads are harvested and are maintained for all loads leaving the farm to enable traceback of the lot one step back to the orchard and one step forward to the processor (huller/sheller and/or handler).	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed flow diagram and spreadsheet for varietal mix and typical pre-bloom to postharvest operations is available. Descriptions of crop management practices and historical harvest dates are available. Lot numbers are assigned as loads are harvested and are maintained for all loads leaving the farm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets for varietal mix by ranch block are available.
1.3 Management Awareness of GAPs and Microbial Hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and operations managers have all received GAP training and reviewed ABC Food Quality and Safety Manual. Documentation of GAP training is available for all supervisors. Periodic update training is documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of GAP training is available for owners and all supervisors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and managers have no awareness of GAPs or microbial hazards; a copy of ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide is available.
1.4 On-farm Hazard Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive on-farm and facility review and documentation of all potential food safety hazards, including biological, physical and chemical, has been completed and independently reviewed. Mitigation and prevention plans, including responsible individuals and timelines, have been assessed and documented for all identified hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Key potential hazards, identified by general GAP documents, have been reviewed. Mitigation and prevention plans, including responsible individuals and timelines, have been assessed and documented for all identified hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/> No actions have been taken; a copy of ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide is available.
1.5 ABC GAPs Recordkeeping	<input type="checkbox"/> Production and farm records clearly demonstrate incorporation of food safety objectives into the management system. Documentation is readily available and current for all eight sections identified in the ABC GAP program. Records allow for easy traceback; one step back to the specific orchard and one step forward to the processor (huller/sheller and/or handler). Commitment to all phases of risk reduction is independently verifiable through periodic audits.	<input type="checkbox"/> Documentation is readily available and current for all eight sections identified in the ABC GAP program. Records allow for easy traceback; one step back to the specific orchard and one step forward to the processor (huller/sheller and/or handler).	<input type="checkbox"/> Records are organized and easily accessible, but may not be available for all eight sections identified in the ABC GAP program.

Section 2: Employee Training

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
2.1 Commitment to Food Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners have developed a clear culture of commitment to food safety and have communicated the company policy to all employees and business partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Management has developed and clearly communicated a commitment to incorporate GAPs and food safety as an integral part of the business and operational plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owner and managers have discussed food safety; a copy of ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide is available.
2.2 GAP Awareness and Training	<input type="checkbox"/> All management and employees have attended a minimum half-day food safety awareness workshop conducted by a recognized education or Extension authority. Copies of course attendance certificates or other documentation of completion are maintained in company files for at least one year beyond employment. Regularly scheduled training and reinforcement sessions are conducted and attendance documented. One or more employees are designated as the quality and safety manager and attends at least one advanced food safety or GAP workshop each year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and all managers have attended a minimum half-day food safety awareness workshop conducted by a recognized education or Extension authority. Copies of course attendance certificates or other documentation of completion are maintained in company files for at least one year beyond employment. Regularly scheduled training and reinforcement sessions are conducted and attendance documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> One or more production managers or employees, designated as the quality and safety manager, have attended a GAPs session.
2.3 Ongoing Hazard Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners have developed a tangible incentive system that encourages on-farm employees to recognize food safety hazards that emerge during seasonal operations. Observations and any corrective actions are documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> GAP training has resulted in documented corrective actions to minimize the risk of microbial contamination associated with manure use, water quality, and orchard floor management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have assigned responsibility for corrective actions, as needed, for hazards associated with manure use, water quality, and orchard floor management.
2.4 Personal Hygiene and Hand Washing	<input type="checkbox"/> Management has documented an effort to comply with OSHA and CAL-OSHA regulations and implemented programs to instill a broad awareness of employees' role in minimizing risk through simple measures of personal hygiene. All management and employees have received specific training in the federal and state regulations governing sanitary facility availability, placement, design, and stocking of supplies. Specific training and weekly reinforcement of proper hand-washing technique is documented. Training materials and language are appropriate for all employees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Management has a documented program to provide sanitary facilities that comply with OSHA and CAL-OSHA regulations. Specific training programs have been initiated to instill a broad awareness of employee's role in minimizing risk through simple measures of personal hygiene. Training materials and language are appropriate for all employees. Documentation of attendance is on file.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and managers have reviewed their level of compliance and an action plan for improvement has been developed.

GAP Management

2.5 Illness and Injury Prevention and Notification

Exceeds Quick-Start Target

☐ A written employee-training program is available. Documentation of attendance at yearly and regularly scheduled training sessions is on file. A clear statement of policy and practice for illness and injury prevention and notification to supervisors has been communicated to all employees. Employees have received specific training on the safe operation of all machines and devices used in production and harvest operations.

Meets Quick-Start Target

Employees have received general awareness training in symptoms of illness and types of personal health conditions or injuries, relevant to food safety, which must be reported. A fair policy that provides for wage-earning potential during short-term illness or injury is in place and communicated to employees. Records of sanitation supplies and facility servicing, and all pesticide and foliar application records are current.

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☐ Records of sanitation supplies and facility servicing, and all pesticide and foliar application records are current. All fertility management practices and application dates are recorded, and all soil amendment and water quality monitoring records are organized and accessible. All pesticide and foliar application records are organized and accessible.

[illegible]

Section 3: Fertilizer and Soil Amendment Practices

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
3.1 Manure Use	<input type="checkbox"/> As recommended by ABC, manure is not used as fertilizer within your operation. All fertilizer and soil amendment practices are documented and readily available.	<input type="checkbox"/> If manure is used in your operation, all ABC GAP Quick-Start risk-reduction practices for manure storage and application to orchards have been incorporated into an on-farm standard operating procedure (SOP) and are documented. No manure is spread or incorporated within 120 days before harvest. OR—No animal manure-based soil amendments and no manure extracts or teas are or have been used at any time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 3. No manure is spread or incorporated within 120 days before harvest.
3.2 Compost Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Compost is produced or sourced from a certified supplier under standards that meet or exceed CIWMB Title 14 Code and testing standards of the U.S. Compost Council. Documentation of process controls, pathogen reduction, and required microbial analysis and other certificates of analysis are available. OR—No animal compost-based soil amendments and no compost extracts or teas are or have been used at any time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Compost is sourced from a certified supplier and complete certificates of analysis are available. OR—No animal compost-based soil amendments and no compost extracts or teas are or have been used at any time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 3. Composted material is used but recordkeeping is incomplete.
3.3 On-farm Hazard Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive on-farm and facility review of all potential sources of contamination from fecal material, including effluent from animal production and human biosolids, that may impact soil, water, crop, and equipment, has been completed and independently reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/> On-farm review for contamination from all potential sources of fecal material, including effluent from animal production and human biosolids, that may impact soil, water, crop, and equipment, has been completed. An action plan has been prepared with responsible individuals and timelines clearly outlined.	<input type="checkbox"/> No actions have been taken.

Section 4: Water Quality and Source

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
<p>4.1 Water Source</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> All ABC GAP Quick-Start hazard assessment practices and plans for on-farm documentation of water source identification and application to orchards have been incorporated into a comprehensive food safety plan, which has been independently reviewed. Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4, and documentation of primary and secondary water sources is complete. An on-farm seasonal use diagram and a specific water-use plan or schematic for each operational block is available.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4. Documentation of primary and secondary water sources has been completed. A general water-use plan or schematic for each operational block is available.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4. A general water-use plan or schematic for each operational block is available.</p>
<p>4.2 Water Quality</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> All ABC Quick-Start practices for microbiological water quality assessment and periodic monitoring for each water source type have been incorporated into an SOP for each operational production block or crop management practice and current documentation is available.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4 and have established the needs and prioritization of microbiological water quality assessment and monitoring. An action plan has been prepared with responsible individuals and timelines clearly outlined.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4. No actions have been taken.</p>
<p>4.3 Defined Action Thresholds</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A baseline of bimonthly testing for at least one season has been used to establish an action threshold for microbiological levels appropriate for the water source. Standardized action steps for further testing and mitigation plans are on file in the event that the thresholds are exceeded. Documentation of training and communication of individual responsibilities, timelines, and reporting requirements is available.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 4 and have obtained professional assistance to develop a practical sampling program based on farm-specific conditions. Baseline testing has begun to establish water quality and to assess action thresholds.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No actions have been taken.</p>

Section 5: Orchard Floor Management

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
5.1 Orchard Floor Management Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Orchard floor management strategies that balance all needs in sustainable crop management, crop quality management, dust reduction objectives, and food safety have been incorporated into a comprehensive document, which has been independently reviewed. A clear plan is in place that encompasses the diversity of soil types, slope, and varietal mix. A specific floor management history and plan for each operational block is available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5. Awareness and prioritization of the preharvest practices for risk reduction have been established and documented. A specific floor management historical profile and plan or schematic for each operational block is available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5. A specific floor management historical profile for each operational block is available.
5.2 Harvest and Windrow	<input type="checkbox"/> The ABC Quick-Start practices for minimizing microbial risks during harvest and while almonds are in windrows have been incorporated into an SOP for each operational production block or crop management practice. These practices are documented on a routine basis during harvest.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5 and have documented the needs and priorities of any future actions with responsible individuals and timelines clearly stated. Awareness training for production managers on the role of proper orchard floor preparation to minimize pooling of water has been documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5. No actions have been taken.
5.3 Orchard Floor Wildlife Hazard Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> A specific and comprehensive assessment of resident and seasonal wildlife that may represent a microbial hazard on the orchard floor has been completed and documented for each production block. Documentation of periodic migration of wildlife and pests from adjacent land or adjacent crops following their harvest operations is available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5. A farm-specific assessment of resident and seasonal wildlife that may represent a microbial hazard on the orchard floor has been initiated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 5. Primary wildlife trouble spots have been identified.

Section 6: Field Sanitation and Employee Hygiene

GAP Management

6.1 Worker Training

Exceeds Quick-Start Target

☐ All year-round and seasonal workers attend annual training sessions and receive weekly reinforcement of the importance of their role in field sanitation, personal hygiene, and proper hand-washing techniques. Designated trainers use training materials and language appropriate for all employees. Training attendance and assessment of on-farm implementation and compliance with company policies is documented and records are available. Bilingual hand-washing posters are widely posted in strategic areas.

Meets Quick-Start Target

☐ All year-round and seasonal workers attend annual training sessions and receive preharvest reinforcement of the importance of their role in field sanitation, personal hygiene, and proper hand-washing technique. Training attendance is documented and records are available. Bilingual hand-washing posters are posted in strategic areas.

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☐ Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 6. Bilingual hand-washing posters are posted in strategic areas.

6.2 Portable Toilet Availability and Quality

☐ Portable or fixed-facility toilets and hand-washing stations are accessible within one-quarter mile of the fieldwork area OR a five minute walk. All facilities meet all OSHA and CAL-OSHA requirements for design, stocking of supplies, and sanitary servicing. Additional facilities are located in orchard blocks during peak activities, as needed. The location relative to orchard block layout is standard and consistent and communicated to supervisors and workers. Portable facilities are consistently maintained in a condition of cleanliness that projects management commitment to worker comfort and dignity.

☐ Portable or fixed-facility toilets and hand-washing stations are accessible within one-quarter mile of the fieldwork area OR are accessible within a five-minute walk. All facilities meet all OSHA and CAL-OSHA requirements for design, stocking of supplies, and sanitary servicing. The location relative to orchard block layout is standard and consistent and communicated to supervisors and workers.


☐ Portable or fixed-facility toilets and hand-washing stations are accessible. All facilities meet all OSHA and CAL-OSHA requirements for design, stocking of supplies, and for sanitary servicing.

Section 7: Pest Control Program

GAP Management

7.1 Pest Control Program

Exceeds Quick-Start Target

 A program for inspection of all buildings, structures and fields to check for evidence of pest populations or deposits of animal droppings has been developed. Comprehensive documentation of assessment and implementation of any needed corrective actions is available for all ABC GAP Quick-Start practices for pest control. Rodent control programs have been maintained and documented for at least one season.

Meets Quick-Start Target

Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 7. An assessment of all GAP Quick-Start practices for pest control has been completed and documented. Rodent control programs have been established for at least the current season.

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☐ Owners and production managers have reviewed the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 7. Rodent control programs for all buildings and equipment facilities have been established for at least the current season.

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Section 8: Harvest and Delivery Sanitation

GAP Management	Exceeds Quick-Start Target	Meets Quick-Start Target	Get Moving Now!
8.1 Harvest Management Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Practices are in place to prevent the introduction of foreign objects or materials into the crop during the harvest process and delivery to the processing facility. A comprehensive analysis of sources of moisture buildup in the orchard has been conducted and guidelines have been developed to prevent excess moisture or pooling of water on the orchard floor. Moisture levels of in-hull almonds are taken prior to pickup and stockpiling to ensure moisture levels are not higher than 6.5–7%. Adjacent fields growing other nuts have been mapped and documented and guidelines exist for preventing cross-contamination with these crops at harvest. Lot numbers are assigned as loads are harvested and are maintained for all loads leaving the farm. Workers have been trained in following these guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Practices are in place to prevent the introduction of foreign objects or materials into the crop during the harvest process and delivery to the processing facility. Management has identified moisture and cross-contamination risks and has communicated these risks to workers. Lot numbers are assigned as loads are harvested and are maintained for all loads leaving the farm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Practices are in place to prevent the introduction of foreign objects or materials into the crop during the harvest process and delivery to the processing facility. Management is aware of moisture buildup on the orchard floor but has taken no steps to prevent it.
8.2 Machinery Sanitation	<input type="checkbox"/> All ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide risk-reduction practices for assuring harvest equipment cleanliness have been incorporated into a SOP. Machinery operators are trained in these practices and are documenting all sanitation procedures. Equipment is cleaned and sanitized between fields as well as at the beginning of harvest.	<input type="checkbox"/> Machinery is cleaned and sanitized at least once a year, or only after it was used in an orchard where manure or compost had been applied after the first of the year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Owners, production managers and field employees have read Section 8 of the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide and are committed to a sanitary harvest.
8.3 Stockpiling	<input type="checkbox"/> All ABC GAP Quick-Start stockpile management guidelines are in place. Moisture levels of in-hull almonds are taken prior to pickup to ensure moisture levels are not higher than 6.5–7%. Monitoring and/or ventilation practices are in place to control moisture build up and condensation within the stockpile.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and/or ventilation practices are in place to control moisture buildup and condensation within the stockpile.	<input type="checkbox"/> Moisture levels are not taken prior to orchard pickup and monitoring/ventilation practices are not in place.
8.4 Transportation Sanitation	<input type="checkbox"/> Practices, procedures, and routine inspections to assure that bins and trailers used in transporting the crop are clean and sanitary to prevent food safety or cross-contamination risks have been incorporated into an on-farm food safety program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bins and trailers are visually inspected before use for signs of debris or nutmeats. If bins have transported another type of nut, management verifies that the bins have been sanitized. No trailers are used that have transported livestock or livestock manure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bins and trailers are visually inspected, but no effort is made to assure that they have been sanitized.

GAP Management

8.5 Delivery and Traceback

Exceeds Quick-Start Target

 Owners, production managers and field employees follow practices to prevent the introduction of foreign objects or materials into the crop during the harvest process and delivery to the processing facility. Management routinely inspects facilities to assure that the huller/sheller and/or handler has implemented sanitation procedures to mitigate food safety risks, and has retained a copy of the processor's traceback procedure that documents at least one step forward and one step back.

Meets Quick-Start Target

☐ Practices are in place to prevent the introduction of foreign objects or materials into the crop during the harvest process and delivery to the processing facility. Management has inspected the huller/sheller and/or handler delivery area prior to harvest for signs of potential contamination, and has asked for a copy of the processor's traceback policy.

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☐ Owners and production managers have read the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide Section 8 and acknowledge the importance of delivering a clean crop as well as obtaining traceback documentation from the processor.

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Section 9: Summing Up

Fill in or highlight your response to each section below.

Date of Audit: _____

Sec 1 Documentation and Traceability	Sec 2 Employee Training	Sec 3 Fertilizer and Soil Practices	Sec 4 Water Quality and Source	Sec 5 Orchard Floor Management	Sec 6 Field Sanitation and Hygiene	Sec 7 Pest Control	Sec 8 Harvest and Delivery Sanitation
1.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	2.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	3.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	4.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	5.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	6.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	7.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	8.1 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Date of Audit: _____

Sec 1 Documentation and Traceability	Sec 2 Employee Training	Sec 3 Fertilizer and Soil Practices	Sec 4 Water Quality and Source	Sec 5 Orchard Floor Management	Sec 6 Field Sanitation and Hygiene	Sec 7 Pest Control	Sec 8 Harvest and Delivery Sanitation
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Example Self-Audit

Sec 1 Documentation and Traceability	Sec 2 Employee Training	Sec 3 Fertilizer and Soil Practices	Sec 4 Water Quality and Source	Sec 5 Orchard Floor Management	Sec 6 Field Sanitation and Hygiene	Sec 7 Pest Control	Sec 8 Harvest and Delivery Sanitation
1.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	2.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	3.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	4.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	5.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	6.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	7.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	8.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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This is an example of a typical GAP-compliant almond production operation in California. Individual section ratings may vary, and the color-coding provides a quick visual guide to key areas where more attention is needed to maximize risk reduction. If your Self-Audit has more than 30% red in any section or overall, it is in your best business interest to understand and implement the practices outlined in the ABC GAP Quick-Start Guide. If any—and especially if many—of your responses couldn't honestly fit into the Get Moving Now option, it's critical that you seek assistance to prioritize and address the key concerns outlined in these sections.